

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1, 9, 11, 19 and 20 are amended. Claim 10 is cancelled. Claims 1-9 and 11-20 are in the application for consideration.

The specification is amended to correct typographical errors.

Each of independent claims 1, 9, 11, 19 and 20 is amended for clarification. Further, each is amended to recite that the conductive layer is a refractory metal silicide in contact with the doped silicon dioxide, with the spacer and with the second conductive material. Accordingly, the conductive layer is stated to be a refractory metal silicide disposed along at the lateral wall, and comprising a part of the contact plug, with the refractory metal silicide having on one of its two opposite sides the second conductive material of the contact plug and on the other of said sides contacting the doped silicon dioxide and the spacer.

The newly cited Hsue patent only discloses fabricating its barrier layer by sputtering TiW or by forming Ti/TiN. Such in no way discloses or suggests forming the conductive layer of Applicant's independent claims of a refractory metal silicide. None of the other references of record likewise is seen to disclose or suggest a gate stack structure associated with a contact plug within a layer of doped silicon dioxide comprising a conductive layer of a refractory metal silicide in the manner which Applicant recites in each of its independent claims. As each of the applied Bronner, Lee et al., Hsue and Ahmad et al. references are lacking in this regard, it is inconceivable that the combination of references could suggest that which Applicant now recites in its respective independent claims 1, 9, 11, 19 and 20.

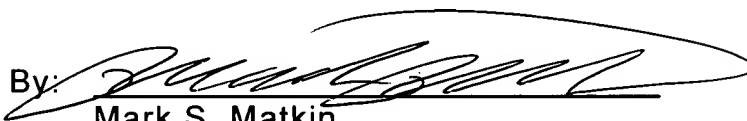
Accordingly, the obvious rejection should be withdrawn, and action to that end is requested.

Applicant's dependent claims should be allowed as depending from allowable base claims, and for their own recited features which are neither shown nor suggested in the cited art.

This application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance, and action to that end is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:   
Mark S. Matkin  
Reg. No. 32,268